

Remarks

Applicant has included in the claims the feature that the low voltage (below 24 volts) is below the voltage required by the respective bus user, i.e., below the minimum operating voltage, into claims 21 and 32. This is supported by the specification in the description of Fig. 1, reading:

“Within the scope of this, the electrical load present at the supply voltage output is first ascertained. This is done by applying a low voltage with current limiting to the supply voltage output A of the apparatus 1 and ascertaining the resultant flow of current using the device 4. In the embodiment described, the low voltage is just a few volts, e.g., approximately 3 volts, is thus far below the 24 volts required by the bus users, which means that the subsequent bus user 2' is not connected by applying the low voltage.”

Since independent claim 35 already defines this feature, Applicant has made no further Amendment to this claim.

The Examiner asserted obviousness of claim 1 over Buhring, in view of Ying and Prendel.

Applicant respectfully does not share the Examiner's point of view, since these state of the art documents cannot be combined so as to derive the present invention. Specifically, the Examiner regarded Buhring and Ying as analogous, because they are from the same field of endeavor, namely, switching systems for power and data transmission. However, Applicant respectfully believes that this is not sufficient to prove that a person of ordinary skill in the art would have, indeed, combined these documents with a reasonable prospect of success. In particular, data and power transmission are two completely different aspects of the operation of a data transmission installation.

Moreover, a combination of these features would by no means result in the present invention as disclosed in claims 21, 32 and 35. These claims define that the low voltage used for testing the subsequent bus user is below the voltage required for operation of the bus user.

In case of a fault, the system according to Ying operates as follows (see the Abstract): each of the nodes opens its switch so that the connected portions of the bus become isolated. The nodes are then subsequently instructed to close their switches. When a node does not respond to a request to close the switch, the fault location has been detected.

If a person skilled in the art would attempt to adopt this concept for connection of the power, he would not choose a voltage lower than the operation voltage to test the bus users. In this case, even a bus user that is not faulty would fail to respond to a request simply because the bus user is unable to operate. Thus, detection of a fault would be impossible.

Applicant respectfully maintains that the current claims are allowable, and the above arguments should overcome the rejections made in the outstanding Office Action.

Applicant respectfully requests a three month extension of time in which to respond to the outstanding Office Action. PTO 2038 is included herewith, authorizing charging a credit card for the prescribed three month extension fee of \$1,050. Please charge any ADDITIONAL fees due by virtue of this Amendment to deposit account 11-0665. A duplicate of this page is included for this purpose.

Wherefore further consideration and allowance of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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